

Vegan Diets

Definition/ cut-off value

Consumption of plant origin foods only, an eating plan with no animal products (no meat, poultry, fish, eggs, milk, cheese or other dairy products) and avoidance of foods made with animal product ingredients.

Participant category and priority level

Category	Priority
Pregnant Women	IV
Breastfeeding Women	IV
Non-Breastfeeding Women	VI
Infants	V
Children	IV

Justification

Generally, vegetarian diets with dairy products and eggs are associated with good health (1). However, strict vegan diets may be inadequate in calories, vitamin B12, vitamin D, calcium, iron, zinc, protein and essential amino acids needed for growth and development.

The more limited the diet, the greater the health risk. It is estimated that 1 to 6% of the population are vegans. WIC can address nutrient deficiencies by managing vegan diets.

Clarifications/ Guidelines

Before assigning this risk code, be sure to document the vegan diet on the diet/health history form.

Infants receiving a soy-based formula are not considered to be following a vegan diet. In order to use this risk code for an infant, the parent/ caregiver must state the current practice of intentionally following and providing a vegan diet to the infant.

Infants older than 10 months and children who are consuming a diet with no animal products (no meat, poultry, fish, eggs, milk, cheese or other dairy products) would qualify under this risk criterion.

References

1. Institute of Medicine: WIC Nutrition Risk Criteria: A Scientific Assessment; 1996; pp. 259-60.
2. Zeman, F.: Clinical Nutrition and Dietetics; 2nd edition; 1991; pp. 122-3.
3. Duyff, R.: The American Dietetic Association's Complete Food & Nutrition Guide; 1996; pp. 553-69.